

MEETING WITH BISHOP CHARLES – 8h30 to 09h30, Monday, 11 February, 2019.

DRAFT MINUTES

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Farewell for chaplain of deacons and welcome of new chaplain of deacons
2. Deacon Emily Hlangane as voting member to DRAE in Edinburgh
3. Building the Highveld Diaconate (Discernment, education and training of deacons)
4. Awareness raising within the Diocese on the Diaconate
5. License to be a deacon

MINUTES:

Meeting began in prayer.

1. Farewell for chaplain of deacons and welcome of new chaplain of deacons

The deacons had requested a formal handover from their current Chaplain of Deacons (Fr Tom Amoore) to the new chaplain (Fr Basil Matthews) in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral. This need was acknowledged. The Bishop may not be available on that day. (Dcn Gwynne to check with Fr Basil and Fr Tom regarding availability – and to book Chapel with Dean's office).

2. Deacon Emily Hlangane as voting member to DRAE Conference in Edinburgh

Concerns have been raised about Dcn Emily taking the trip, for health reasons. She will be seeing her specialist before the end of February, and a decision will be made then as to whether there would be a need to choose another deacon from another Diocese (preferably a neighbouring diocese) to represent us overseas.

3. Building the Highveld Diaconate (distinctive)

Concern was expressed by Deacon Gwynne on the lack of deacons in our Diocese, given that Bishop Charles is Liaison Bishop for the Diaconate in ACSA. Currently, in our Diocese of the Highveld, there are 4 active deacons, and two deacons who do not attend diocesan deacons' meetings, despite being invited. One of them is active in youth ministry (Happening) and the other is currently largely inactive but had been involved in VOCARE. Most of the deacons are near or over retirement age. In comparison Diocese of Grahamstown boasts 33 deacons. Other Dioceses are actively exploring growing their distinctive diaconate (Christ the King to ordain 3 in Lent this year), in others a start was made and has petered out (Natal, Pretoria).

So far there has been only one person discerned to test her vocation to the distinctive diaconate in the Diocese. She is currently in FOV. One other person was mentioned as seeming to have a diaconal calling. Bishop to make that discernment.

One of the obstacles to raising up deacons would appear to be lack of understanding among priests and laity, as well as those testing their vocation, about the distinctive role and ministry of the deacon.

Bishop spoke about the need to refocus from FOV (Fellowship of Vocation)...which raised expectations of ordination to the priesthood among those who attended, to FOX (Fellowship of Exploration), which would be an exploration of calling – whether that be to a ministry for laity or to ordained ministry (priest or deacon).

Bishop asked whether Dcn Gwynne had been asked to address FOV on the Diaconate, (Confirmed for 09 March).

4. Awareness raising within the Diocese on the Distinctive Diaconate.

It was decided that an Open Day be planned on (Date?) to grow awareness on the calling to lay ministry and ordained ministry – priest and deacon. It was also decided that the discussion on the vocation to and ministry of the distinctive diaconate be presented once again at Clergy Day (14 May?) to our priests.

5. License to be a Deacon

Deacon Emily Hlangane's license is due to expire this year, discussions would need to be held with her parish and herself regarding extending her license, if the Bishop so agrees.

Dcn Gwynne reminded the Bishop that her own license to be a deacon would be expiring on her 70th Birthday in August. The Bishop was requested to give thought to extending the license for certain ministries currently held, or consideration be given to the handover of the various International (Board Member of Diakonia DRAE), ACSA (Chairperson of ACSA Deacons), Diocesan (Diocesan Counselling Board, Siyalela IGWA Supervision and Training, BOM) and Parish commitments currently held.

This to be at the Bishop's discretion, both as Diocesan Bishop and Liaison Bishop.

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